



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VA DMHMRSAS Commissioner Reinhard to Speak in Leesburg

Commissioner to focus on empowerment and recovery for individuals with mental illness

RICHMOND – On Thursday, September 27, Dr. James Reinhard, Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services, will speak on *Empowering People with Mental Illness in a Time of Worry about Public Safety*. The public is both invited and encouraged to attend.

Thursday, September 27, 11 a.m.

**Board of Supervisors Room, Loudoun County Government Center
1 Harrison Street SE, Leesburg**

While reviews of the tragedy at Virginia Tech highlighted gaps in Virginia's public mental health system, Commissioner Reinhard's presentation will focus on positive changes he has witnessed during his extensive career as a psychiatrist and administrator – changes that bring hope for people with mental health issues. Advancements in modern medicines and recovery-based improvements in therapy have powerfully affected the possibilities for a successful recovery. Awareness of these advances and the knowledge that recovery is possible impacts our ability as a community to make positive, solution-oriented changes to our public mental health system.

"Recovery is possible, even for people struggling with the most serious mental illnesses," said Commissioner Reinhard. "Today, effective treatment can reduce symptoms and raise the quality of life for as much as 90 percent of individuals with mental illness. Also, recovery is not one-size-fits-all – it looks different for different people. The concept of tailoring treatment to individuals is actually relatively new. Virginia's mental health system is currently in the process of transforming to incorporate more person-centered approaches that facilitate recovery."

Tom Maynard, Executive Director of Loudoun's Community Services Board, will introduce the Commissioner. The speech will include a question-and-answer period, and will be followed by a box lunch for attendees, compliments of the event sponsor, Friends of Loudoun Mental Health.

About Friends of Loudoun Mental Health: Friends of Loudoun Mental Health is a charitable organization with 50+ years of service to mental health and recovery from mental illness for residents in Loudoun County, Virginia. Friends' programs, such as A Place to Call Home which provides rent supplements, are based on a public-private partnership with Loudoun County Mental Health Services.

About DMHMRSAS: Available to citizens statewide, Virginia's public mental health, mental retardation and substance abuse services system is comprised of 40 community services boards (CSBs) and 16 state facilities. DMHMRSAS seeks to promote dignity, choice, recovery, and the highest possible level of participation in work, relationships, and all aspects of community life for these individuals with mental health, mental retardation or substance abuse disorders.